

PRESS RELEASE



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Humans and Our World: the focus of the Vanier College 2008 Social Science Festival

What have the development of aboriginal territories, conflicts in Darfur, fair trade coffee, stress, burnout, racism and love got in common? They all look at the complexity of human life and they are all hot topics during the 8th Annual Social Science Festival at Vanier College, which runs from October 20 to 24, 2008, and features conferences, presentations, films, and panel discussions.

Fighting to protect aboriginal land and preserve the Manitoba boreal forest from corporate development is what drives **Sophia Rabliauskas**, the first keynote speaker of the festival, on Monday, October 20. Her work to protect her home community of Poplar River First Nation has earned her both the 2007 Goldman Environmental Prize and the Order of Manitoba award in 2008.

Jonathan Pedneault, co-producer, co-writer and co-narrator with Sacha Trudeau of *Refuge: A Film about Darfur*, will also speak on Monday about what exactly is going on in Darfur. A student activist who gives seminars in schools to raise awareness of his favourite subject, genocide - the Holocaust, Rwanda, and now Darfur - Pedneault is currently a Political Science student at the University of Ottawa and founder of *Soprégé, Société de prévention du génocide*.

Another Monday speaker, **Jennifer Alleyn**, filmmaker and daughter of the well-known Canadian artist Edmund Alleyn, will present her film "My father's studio." A sampling of other topics on the menu later in the week includes "Stress and Burnout", "True Love vs. Infatuation", a round-table discussion on self-segregation among students, a Panel on Cultural and Sexual Diversity, and "Restorative Justice" – an alternative that encourages healing instead of punishment.

On Friday, October 24, filmmaker and Vanier Humanities teacher, **Michael Mackenzie**, will discuss his just-released film "Adam's Wall" filmed in Montreal with the participation of Vanier students. The film addresses the relationship between a Jewish boy and a Lebanese girl. At 11:30 a.m. **Sidney Ribaux**, one of the founders of Equiterre which started the alter-globalization movement will deliver a keynote address entitled, "Equiterre: From Dream to Reality" the story of how Ribaux and a group of young québécois succeeded in promoting ecological and socially just economic alternatives. And finally at 1:00 p.m., the last speaker of the Festival, **Oliver Hillel** will expose the conflicts between science, politics, economics and biological diversity.

For a full schedule of the Festival's twenty-five events consult the Vanier College website at <http://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/events/socscifest08/>

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